

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BELGRA 01872 010805 Z

14

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 NEA-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6069

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E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: PFOR, YO

SUBJ: TANJUG BEIRUT ARTICLE AND OTHERS

REF BELGRADE 1638

SUMMARY: PAO MET WITH TANJUG TO DISCUSS TENDENTIOUS
PRESS COVERAGE US AND POSSIBLE CORRECTION OF BEIRUT ARTICLE
ALLEGING CIA INVOLVEMENT IN ISRAELI ACTIONS. RESPONSE FRIENDLY
AND SOMEWHAT FORTHCOMING. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING MEETING WITH TANJUG DIREPUOMR PETAR IVACIC AND
CHIEF EDITOR TEODOR OLCIC APRIL 28
PAO RAISED TENDENTIOUS
TANJUG COVERAGE US. STATED, WHILE HAD NO DESIRE CONTROL
PRESS, DID HOPE HOSTILE AND INACCURATE ARTICLES WHICH COMPLICATES
AND HARMED GOOD RELATIONSHIP COULD BE AVOIDED IN FUTURE.

2. BEGAN BY CITING AKSENTIJEVIC ARTICLE FROM BEIRUT ALLEGING
CIA INVOLVEMENT IN RECENT ISRAELI ACTION AS PRIME EXAMPLE
SUCH HARMFUL COVERAGE. NOTED ITEM PROTESTED BOTH WASHINGTON
AND HERE. REACTION ESPECIALLY STRONG FOR AT LEAST THREE REASONS;
1) SLANDEROUS ATTACK ON HIGHLY- RESPECTED, NOW DECEASED AMERICAN
DIPLOMAT; 2) PARALLEL TO " BIG LIE" RE US DESTRUCTION ARAB AIRFORCE
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PAGE 02 BELGRA 01872 010805 Z

AT TIME OF SIX- DAY WAR, AND 2) STRONG US STAND AGAINST TERRORISM OF ANY KIND.

3. IN REPLY IVACIC ADMITTED SOURCE ATTRIBUTION NOT CLSEJ# IN TANJUG ENGLISH BULLETIN. ALSO SAID AKSENTIJEVIC CAUTIONED TELEGRAPHICALLY TO CITE SOURCES MORE CLEARLY EVEN BEFORE US PROTESTS MADE. SAID FULLER TEXT OF ARTICLE CONTAINED PASSAGES FROM WHICH READER COULD ASSUME PLO SOURCING, BUT THIS WRONGLY NOT INCLUDED IN BULLETIN. INDICATED WILLINGNESS CONSIDER CLARIFICATION OR RETRACTION ATTACK ON CURT MOORE, NOTING " EMOTION ON YUGOSLAV SIDE" WHICH HAD SURROUNDED ASSASSINATION AMBASSADOR ROLOVIC. INQUIRED WHETHER DEPARTMENT HAD RELEASED DISAVOAL OF ALLEGATION WHICH COULD BE PRINTED. PAO DESCRIBED DAVIES STATEMENT ORALLY AND IS FOLLOWING- UP WITH LETTER.

4. IVACIC ALSO PROTESTED CALLING IN OF WASHINGTON TANJUG CORRESPONDENT BOGUNOVIC, DESCRIBING IT AS " STRANGE" AND ATTEMPT TO EXERT " SOME KIND OF PRESURE," SINCE HE COULD NOT BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT COLLEAGUE IN BEIRUT FILED. PAO REPLIED THAT CORRESPONDENT NO DOUBT CONSIDERED MERELY DIRECT CHANNEL TO HIS AGENCY WHICH HAD CARRIED OFFENSIVE ARTICLE.

5. PAO THEN ASKED WHY TANJUG DID NOT CARRY CORRECTION RE ATTACK ON VOA MADE BY EDITOR FRONT, IVACIC REPLIED THAT HE HAD NOT CONSIDERED THIS NECESSARY AFTER HE HAD LEARNED THAT PAO LETTER OF CORRECTION WAS SENT TO ALL YUGOSLAV MEDIA CARRYING FRONT ATTACK. PAO RESPONDED THAT, SINCE STORY SPREAD NATION- WIDE AND MADE INTERNATIONAL ISSUE DUE TANJUG COVERAGE, TANJUG MIGHT WELL HAVE GIVEN EQUAL COVERAGE TO CORRECTION.

6. PAO THEN FOCUSED ON PROBLEM OF EXCERPTS IN BOTH RED AND BLACK TANJUG BULLETINS. NOTED FORMER FIRST THING READ BY YUGOSLAV LEADERSHIP AND LATTER BY DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY. THUS INADEQUATE EXCERPTS OF ARTICLES NOT ONLY CONTRIBUTED TO PROBLEMS AND CONFUSION RE ATTRIBUTION SUCH AS AROI RE BEIRUT ARTICLE, BUT ALSO FREQUENTLY GAVE YUGOSLAV LEADERSHIP FALSE IMPRESSION OF OVERALL ARTICLE IN US PRESS, AS IN CASE OF RAY ANDERSON OF NYT, WHERE EXCERPT GAVE IMPRESSION HE HAD STATED YUGOSLAVIA TURNING TO SOVIETS WHEN HE REALLY HAD SAID, " SOME PEOPLE ARE SAYING...".

7. MEETING ENDED WITH IVACIC/ OLIC WELCOMING FRANK EXCHANGE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 BELGRA 01872 010805 Z

OF OPINION. PAO NOTED USED TO MEET REGULARLY WITH SLOBODAN OBRADOVIC, NOW IN BONN AND MLADEN GAVRILOVIC, NOW IN LONDON. WOULD MAKE A POINT OF LUNCHING REGULARLY WITH NEW DIPLOMATIC EDITOR, VELIMIR BUDIMIR, IN EFFORT TO DISCUSS AND AVERT FURTHER MISUNDERSTANDINGS TO EXTENT POSSIBLE.

8. AS PAO DEPARTED, OLIC STATED HAD JUST BEEN IN BEIRUT AND ANTICIPATED FURTHER DOCUMENTATION PLO ALLEGATION RE CIA ACTIVITY THERE. HOWEVER, ASSURED THAT SOURCE OF ANY ALLEGATION WOULD BE CAREFULLY CITED.
JOHNSON

NOTE BY OC/ T: # AS RECEIVED.

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